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ADAPTATION.

THOMAS HUGHES.

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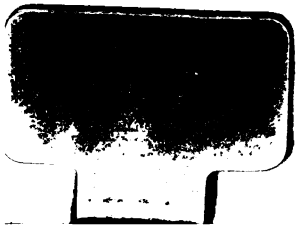

ADAPTATION:

OR,

MUTUAL FITNESS BETWEEN THE ORDER OF THINGS AND MAN.

BY

THOMAS HUGHES.

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PREFACE.

Most of this small book was prepared and delivered as a Lecture by the author to the Young Men's Christian Association at Doncaster. Some parts of it may betray evidence of oral delivery, rather than a book for readers; this the author was not altogether inclined to alter. It was composed for delivery, without an intention then to publish; and it would be hardly compatible with first intentions to modify its form so as to leave no trace of its original purpose and service.

For conveniency, and as resting-places for the reader, it is divided into numerical sections; and the last section, with a few other passages, is added to the original.

The original object was not to enter into particular detail, but to suggest and comprehend the subject within as small a compass

as reason dictated and other conditions served. To enter into a minute analytical detail would require a much larger work; which might not be even so useful, nor be read by some who may read and profit by a smaller work.

DONCASTER,
March 19th, 1862.

ADAPTATION.

I.—EXISTENCE.

All the problems, theories, and speculations that ever have been, and ever will be, in the world, in some way or other, are predications of existence, in itself, its source, its laws, or some of its conditions and relations. Existence is surrounded with profound mystery. The mental wealth, energy, and resources of all countries and ages past, have been applied with constancy and diligence to fathom its profundity and understand its shrouded secrecy. Though in itself the nearest to us, yet in point of thought it is the furthest from us, and in understanding the deepest and most difficult of all. It is one of those profound subjects that the world, as it grows older, does not master and understand; and perhaps never will understand thoroughly. Existence, in all its features and laws, carries us to the unseen, to the mysterious, and to the infinite. In our ordinary classification,

we divide existence into the finite and the infinite, into the dependent and the independent, into the material and the spiritual, into the true and the real, and the adventitious and the circumstantial. Though it is easy thus to classify existence and draw the line of difference in certain points; yet there are points in the classification which perplex our nicest analysis and broadest conceptions. Hence the fertile source of the numerous systems of atheism, nominalism, realism, idealism, materialism, pantheism, with several more.

Though existence in itself eludes human understanding as to its nature and mode; yet the fact of it recommends itself to our consciousness, reason, and conviction; hence a matter of common belief. Existence has been denied by the unbeliever in material substance on one hand, and the unbeliever in the first great cause on the other. It is well that these systems are in the extreme of each other, and have no natural alliance and sympathy with each other; for if they could effectually unite their forces and weapons, they would in their own belief, at least, sweep universal existence into eternal oblivion, and leave us with nothing but vain imagination to think of and depend upon. We shall just give two

examples, to illustrate these extreme views, in two individuals extremely different from each other, and, in several views, the most remarkable and philosophical persons of their age. Bishop Berkeley, a learned and most philosophical Irish Prelate, who wrote several works, is the first example which we shall mention. In a work called *The Principles of Human Knowledge*, he worked out a most ingenious system of Idealism, in which he reduces our conceptions of material substance into mere ideas. The learned Bishop would say, that the faces of our friends, the houses we live in, the chairs on which we sit, the bread we eat, the stars we see, and the pain we feel, are nothing in themselves, but our ideas. He acknowledges that to us they are the same as if they were reality, so we need not trouble ourselves about them at all; though in themselves they have no existence except in our brain. You would think it rather curious, that man's hunger is satisfied with his ideas, his burden lightened with ideas; or his wounds, wants, and sorrows are nothing but simple ideas. A man burning in an idea, drowning in an idea, crushed by an idea, dying for want of an idea.

A superficial thinker would dispose of the Idealism of Berkeley abruptly, as a theory based

upon fancy, unworthy of thought and calm consideration. In a certain relation it is a severely logical system, and the result of the most acute analysis. Locke, in his great work, *The Human Understanding*, divided the qualities of things into "primary" and "secondary," and held that the secondary ones were not essential qualities in the substance, but a kind of conceptions in the human mind. From this naturally Berkeley reasoned and concluded that the "primary" qualities as well as the "secondary" were Ideas in the mind; so in his hands matter, in all its aspects and qualities, is a complete system of Idealism. His reasoning was,—if colour and bitterness were not reality in material substance, but certain sensations in the human mind, who could prove that extension and solidity were anything else but ideas also? Locke and other philosophers held, also, that material substance was behind our Ideas, and that we perceive nothing but our Ideas; it was considered as a kind of a *tertium quid;* hence Berkeley reasoned very logically,—if we cannot see material substance, but the Ideas of it, how can we believe in it? there is no proof that anything but Ideas exists. Philosophers divided the qualities and the substratum of matter from each other. Berkeley asked what is

that substratum, nobody could answer him: hence, as you cannot show me the substratum of matter, nor tell me what it is, I tell you that it is nothing but Idealism. You see, doubtless, that the views of the metaphysical Doctor were logical and natural from these premises; and if such philosophy were accepted, his conclusions could never logically be opposed. Berkeley's system of Idealism is a simple deduction from existing philosophical views; and we think those views were unphilosophical and incorrect. These were denying reality to secondary qualities; making Ideas the absolute objects of perception, and nothing else; and dividing the qualities of matter and its substratum from each other. If these views be accepted, Idealism cannot be successfully opposed. But allow reality to the secondary qualities as well as to the primary; grant that we come into contact with matter face to face; and that the substratum of matter is one with its qualities; we can meet Berkeley, and combat with his ingenious and subtle reasoning.

Berkeley thought, if he could show that material substance was nothing but a conception of the mind, that a great service would be thus rendered to truth and religion. He intended to

make materialism impossible, by showing that the only real existence is the conscious spiritual. It was his ambition to deprive all sceptics in a spiritual world, and in an independent and infinite cause, of every weapon and excuse; and certain it is, if he could have proved to satisfaction that nothing but mind really exists, there would be no alternative but to believe in a spiritual existence. He ignores the real existence of the visible world, and if there be an existence at all, it is the spiritual. If all believed in the philosophy of Idealism, there would be no unbelief in a spiritual existence, for nothing else exists but the spiritual. Great victory: it is well if it is not based on imaginable Idealism. Be the case as it may, it is a ground to oppose infidelity, which can never appeal to the consciousness and senses of men, and men will always follow these before anything else.

Hume went to the other extreme, he denied spiritual existence. We mention Hume, simply as an illustration of a class, and as cotemporary with Berkeley. He thought, as the good Bishop, with philosophical boldness and great clearness, did away with material substance, that he, with equal plausibility, might sweep away the great infinite cause and all spiritual existence. Hume

thought that his system had the advantage over that of Berkeley, inasmuch as material substance presented itself to the senses, and an infinite intelligent cause only to our rational deduction. And so far as the belief of mankind at large goes, if it came to that, they would believe their immediate senses, before they would their rational deductions. Berkeley said, Infidelity is wrong, and an impossibility; for the visible world is nothing but modifications of Ideas. Hume answered, You are wrong, nothing exists but matter, your senses are all right, your deduction and revelation are all wrong. If we are allowed to be the jury in so great a case, we believe the two wrong: matter exists, mind exists: the two are essentially needful, and are the complement of the universe of God. The things which God has united let no man put asunder. We are compelled by our senses to believe in one; we are compelled by reason to believe in the other; and, by revelation, in the two.

We know also the qualities or attributes of existence. We know extension, form, colour, smooth or rough, solid or liquid, as belonging to material substance. We understand, also, that will, memory, judgment, and reason, are powers or attributes of mind. Wherever we

meet with these things, we judge accordingly; we know existence in its attributes, as we know a cause in its results.

Existence is characterized by variety. Never are two objects found exactly alike; and never precisely the same two minutes together. Things are classed into their various orders and classes, and thus bear similarity to one another; and those which are most like one another, there is a sufficient diversity to mark their distinction. Every object we see, every sound that reaches the ear, every taste of the mouth, every scent of the nostril, every sensation of the feeling, every emotion of the heart, every word of the tongue, every conception of the mind, and every action done by man, bear marks of variety and difference. What innumerable objects pass before our eyes in a day! but the thoughts which pass through the mind are far greater in number, yet all have their characteristic differences. How inconceivably rich must be the resources and capabilities of universal existence! Though every moment stands alone, and every object and law have their characteristic identity, yet there is a common likeness and relation between them all. All the objects and laws in the Divine order unite in the one Infinite Cause; there is

also a relative unity between all. All mind in the whole universe is the same in essence and attributes, and all material substance, notwithstanding its diversity of forms and circumstances, is one in essence and qualities.

II.—THE LAW OF ADAPTATION IN GENERAL.

THE law of adaptation pervades universal being. It is seen in every object, and observed in every relation and position. It is observed in the cloud and the earth, in the sun and the fruit, in the breeze and health, in the fish and the water, in the wing of the bird and the atmosphere, in the beast and in the grass. This law is as universal as existence itself; there is not an object nor a spot, in the whole domain of the Infinite, where it exists not. It is as constant as time; there is not a moment in duration, that does not carry with it its adaptation to all its creatures and ends.

This law of fitness is between things, and some other things. It supposes two faces, it implies existence with laws and suitable end. This you see in the magnitude, in the powers, in the position, means, and resources of things.

If the sun were less in magnitude, in a different position, and had different powers to what it has, his service to us would be unfit. And this is only one instance of adaptation, it runs through the whole of God's order, from the smallest thing to the most magnificent in the catalogue of being.

The law of adaptation contains in itself the highest truths; if proved, it shows an intelligent mind as the designer of all, that every thing has a fit end, and that every thing is capable to fill its destiny in the order of things. If this were denied, the palace of the universe would be deprived of its architect, wisdom robbed of her glory, truth of her evidence, the Divine order of her utility, and existence of her end. Cosmos would be transformed into chaos, and the order of things deprived of its value, beauty, harmony, and utility.

We have two ways by which we test the value of things; by the importance and excellency of their end, and by their fitness to fill or meet that end. But we often lose sight of the real end of things, and are careless whether it is small or great in itself, so as it meets our views, passions, or wants; hence we test things as to their value, in the degree they are adapted to

accomplish the end we have in view. The value of my eye, my ear, my hand, and all the organs of my body, and the powers of my mind, is, in the degree they are fitted to accomplish some high and needful service to their possessor. The value of the sun is, that it imparts light, warmth, and vegetation; the water is valuable because it allays thirst, and removes pollution; we prize bread and all the articles of food, for the universal reason, that they meet our conscious and constant requirements and preserve health and life. The dresses we wear, the houses we live in, the instruments we use, and all the articles and conveniences of life, we value on account of their adaptation for their specific ends.

The wealth and variety of the universal world would be of no service and pleasure to man, if they had no adaptation to meet his wants and serve his purposes. Its wealth he could not have possessed, its laws he could not have observed, its blessings he could not have enjoyed, and its resources he never could have developed. Conscious of great wants, high powers, responsibility, and ambition; yet he has no blessings to meet his wants, no field of labour fit for the exercise of his powers; no law that he can keep,

so as to commend himself to his Supreme Sovereign, and no achievements by his diligent perseverance which he can obtain. He would be repulsed every where; pained by every thing; and absolutely miserable and hopeless in every relation. He would be out of place and from home everywhere and in every thing. He would be a being without a counterpoint to his nature; the universe to him would be worse than useless, it would be a burden and an obstruction.

Not only all would be useless to man; but man, also, himself would be unfit and useless to everything. The fields would grow with thistles and nettles into one common wilderness, houses would dilapidate and decay into one common ruin. Commerce would stagnate and fail; art, science, philosophy, and religion, could not be required, for they would be impossible. Things could not be done without adaptation, no more than the engine can go without the steam, breathing without lungs, speaking without a tongue, seeing without eyes, or writing without pen, ink, and paper. But admit the law of adaptation, and man and the universe are united, and so long as this continues, there will be no divorcement. Man is made for the universe, and the universe is made for man.

The face of man and that of the universe answer each other in all points; rob man of his counterpart, you destroy his completeness, and even his existence; deprive the universe of man, you annihilate its ornament, its chief agent, and the great object of its care and kindness. They exist for each other; and walk hand in hand, constantly attending to the requirements of each other. There is one great difference, however; man is more selfish than the Divine order; he attends to things for the reason of existence and personal circumstances, she attends to him from motives of benevolence and disinterestedness. Divine order, also, is more regular and faithful to man, than he is to her laws and requirements.

Of the innumerable beings and things in this world, man is the only being who stands related to all. Other beings and things have particular and subordinate ends and relations, and are so fitted for them accordingly. But man stands united with all, and all, in some way or other, stand united to him; hence he is adapted for all and all, are adapted for him. He is related to the lowest form of existence,—even the inert clod of the earth is fit for one side of his nature,—and he has a fitness for the clod; he stands nearly united to the highest beings of

intelligence and rank in the universe, and they stand related to him; and there is an exact mutual fitness on both sides to sustain the relations which exist between them. Man is a compound being; he partakes of the nature of the lower and of the higher beings in creation; he spreads himself over the extremes of the universe, and these are suitable to meet him all in all. In him heaven and earth are united; he is the portable microcosm of the conscious invisible, and of the tangible visible; he is the great uniting link between the known and the unknown, the mortal and the immortal, the animal and the Divine. So far as we know, it is the largest and the most important link in finite existence.

If man were placed on this globe with his present organization, some thousands of years before he was, there would have been a mutual unfitness; for unfitness on one side involves an unfitness on the opposite, too. For ages this globe had been undergoing changes to be a fit habitation for man; and when it was in a fit condition to receive him as her final lord and servant, he was called by a higher power to be her illustrious guest. As a man builds a noble and suitable palace for himself, knowing all his own wants and circum-

stances as he does, so the great Architect of all built this part of the universe conveniently for all the wants and relations of his great tenant—man. The palace is consummately furnished with all elements and agents, to meet the greatest and the minutest wants of its noble occupier. The conditions of occupation are, use, enjoyment, and acknowledgment. Though it has been in daily operation for these thousands of years, there is as much fitness as there was the first day of occupation,—and that in spite of the neglect and rebellion of man. The only unfitness we see, is, man has not come up to the order of things; he has neglected the true culture of his occupation, and is in great arrears to his infinite Landlord. So exact a correspondence in the two sides to each other shows, as clear as moral evidence can prove, that the same Architect formed the two, and that He is infallible in wisdom, and illimitable and unchangeable in benevolence.

So complete is the adaptation, that if one element in nature were deficient, or different to what it is, there would be an unfitness to meet our present organization. If, for instance, the element of water, or the material for fire, or the small seed out of which bread is made, were

absent, man could not possibly exist. If the elements of life were different to what they are in their integral parts, they could not have met the wants and sustain human life. If the ingredients of bread, water, fire, and the articles of clothing, were differently equalized to what they are, they could not be suitable for our present wants; if the gases of the atmosphere were differently composed, they would be unfit for the lungs, the blood, the health, and the life of man. Again, if man were different in his constitution and organs to what he is, he would be unfit for the Divine order in its present form. Suppose, as a general thing, that man had no eyes, or no ears, or no tongue, or hands, would he be fit to do his work, and keep his position as an active and a rational being? It is evident that there would be an irreconcilable incongruity. The work of the universe would stop, blessings could not be enjoyed and appreciated, human wants could not be supplied, the human race could not exist. If he had no intelligence, moral affection, and conscience, he would be unfit for his position as a ruler, as a member of common society, and as the great agent of the work required to be done, and the duties demanded at his hands. Even if the

powers, the organs, the relations, and position of man were different to what they are, there would be an unfitness in him to meet the requirements of things. The powers of man, and that of the Divine order, answer one another in all points and proportion, so that one cannot be defaced without the other suffers.

III.—THE SENSATIONAL ORGANS.

If we enter into a more minute detail, we shall see equally strikingly this adaptation between the organs and powers of man, and the laws and elements of the order outside him. Take his corporeal senses first, and between these and external nature there is an exact correspondence. The sensation of sight is intended to give pleasure, enrich and educate the mind and the heart, avoid danger, gain the means of life, and be useful to others. These eyes, though beautiful in themselves, would be of no use without light, the means of life, and the beauty and charm of the universe outside. Every body who has the power of seeing, is conscious of the complete fitness between nature and this important organ. The sense of hearing, again, is intended for happiness, obedience,

avoiding danger, usefulness, and the culture of the mind. But the best sense for hearing would be useless and a great incumbrance without a suitable counterpart outside us. The order of sound, the law of harmony, the voices of our friends and companions, and intelligent language, complete the counterpart. The organ of taste was designed to give pleasure, protection to life, a kind of a sense-motive to perpetuate life, and an infallible power to separate the good from the bad, and the healthy from the unhealthy. But this useful power would be useless, without articles of consumption, variety, and other powers corresponding with our likes and dislikes. The organ of smell was given us to preserve our life, as monitor of health and cleanliness, and a source of much pleasure. To meet this, the flowers and shrubs of nature exhale unceasingly their fragrant breath. The sense of feeling is designed to save man from a thousand dangers, and give him an unceasing pleasure. But if nature had nothing to remedy our wounds, clothe and warm us from the inclemency of the cold, allay our pain, and satisfy our feeling want, all our feelings would be an awful burden and an insupportable calamity. The sense of hunger and thirst, though painful in the ex-

tremely conscious feeling of them, yet they are monitors of wants and dangers, and intended to protect life from neglect, and increase human pleasure, in the enjoyment of providential blessings; but hunger and thirst would be intolerable without bread and liquid to satisfy them, ay, would soon end in death. The feeling of fatigue without chairs, couches, beds, benches, or some spot to rest our weary limbs, would be unfit and incapable of being borne long. The conscious feeling of sleep finds its counterpart of fitness in the kind provision of night, some quiet resting-place, and the power of closing our eyelids, and forgetting the cares, excitements, and sorrows of time for a considerable portion of the twenty-four hours, all life through, till we shall find our last sleep in the grave.

IV.—THE INTELLECTUAL DEPARTMENT.

If we proceed to observe his intellectual nature, we shall see also evidences of the highest adaptation. The peculiar characteristic of man is his intelligence: he is a thinking being. His corporeal senses are subservient to his thinking nature: they are mediums between his superior

nature and the external universe. They are the convenient channels of the ingress and the egress: they are the highways of busy transit from and into the great palace of the mind. There is as exact an adaptation between the mind and the senses, as there is between the senses and the exterior world; which shows at the same time, that there must be the same adaptation between the external world and the mind. If any two things agree with each other, and one of them agree with a third, the third agrees with the two, and there is a union between the whole.

But we need not throw it to the ground of deductive reasoning for proof of this adaptation: it is clear to perception and consciousness. The actions and modifications of the intellectual nature in man, are as varied as those of his senses and external life; indeed, most of them proceed from it. The law of adaptation exists between the order of things, and every true possible act and modification of the mind.

As an intelligent being, man has the power of superior perception. The whole universe of wealth and happiness would be of no service to any beings, if they had no power of perceiving them. Man has the power of seeing things in

their proper forms, place, colour, and magnitude; which he could not have possessed, if there were no adaptation between his powers and their orders. He has powers to see things in all their variety, and if these powers were cultivated more perfectly, the resources of the universe would appear greater, and more available for all high and useful purposes. Man does not need greater number of perceptive powers; but the better cultivation of those which he possesses. There is a happy correspondence between the elements of the Divine government, and the nature and number of man's perceptive powers. We are not capable of conceiving the possibility of any new perceptive powers; we are equally incapable of conceiving any kind of existence or quality, which is not adapted to one of our present perceiving powers. We are capable of conceiving greater variety and degree of perfection in the development of things to our perceptions; but all within the range of our present powers, as to number and fitness. Not only man has the power to perceive things, but, also, the function of an intelligent understanding. In this is his superiority over the brute creation, as well as the peculiar fitness of his nature as a rational

being, in his counter-relation to the Divine order. Unaccountable animals perceive things, as presented to their senses in different forms, colours, and some external relations suitable to meet their wants; but it is the superiority of man, to know things in their different qualities, uses, and relations of cause, law, and effect. This rational understanding of things is not a mere organic intuition, but a power capable of being used or abused. It is a thing developed by laborious search, careful reasoning, exact deduction, and nice and accurate experiments. The absence of this would debase man into the category of brutes, and unfit him for all the requirements of his rational position; without it he could neither meet his own wants, and save his own life, nor discharge his duties in his relation to God, and the universe, in their laws, blessings, and creatures; possessing this, he can meet all demands, perform all functions, accommodate himself to every circumstance, rise to the level of every law, use all blessings, and be the master over his own destiny and that of others.

Another mark of adaptation, is the power of using and appropriating things to their true and proper end. This he could not have but for his intelligent nature: but for this, he could not be

fit for the Divine order at all. Without this appropriating power he would be a creature of fate, without power, and all the resources of the wide world could have been of no value to him. This raises him to a throne of unfaded majesty, puts all power in his hand, makes all subject to his will and pleasure, and stamps untold value, between him and all. In vain you tell man all are at his service and under his control: if he has no power of appropriation, he is as if he had nothing. It is a provocation to say, that he is a tenant of a rich palace, and an inhabitant of a sublime universe, surrounded with blessings, and loaded with benefits. If he cannot use and apply them to their proper purpose and end, they are of no value, they only increase his misery. Gold is of no value unless there is a power to use it; bread will not preserve life but in the use of it; the helm is precious when there is a power to control it to its important and proper end; the staff is of no use to a man whose arms are palsied; the means of life and happiness would be tantamount to death and misery, but for the high gift and privilege of the power of appropriating things aright. This makes the poisonous safe, the electric cloud innocent, the rough stone, the cold clod, the pointed

thorn, and the dull beast useful. In this is his safety, success, happiness, and dignity. Without it his life would be one of slavery and not of power; it would be one of meanness and subserviency, rather than of proud and exalted dominion. His service would be passive, hence subordinate and small; he could do but little to others, because mean and powerless himself. The chief instruments of his high power are his brain, hand, and tongue. Without them he would be as weak as Samson deprived of his hair; and unfit to sit on the throne of his high destiny, and preside over all the affairs of this lower region of creation.

But the order of things is adapted for man, as he is to meet it on the high ground of this intelligent nature. The order that can meet man as an intelligent being must be high and rich in her laws, objects, agents, blessings, and capabilities. It must be intelligent in itself, and the production of intelligence. Not only it must be equal to the powers and susceptibilities of man, but infinitely superior; for the thing which is only equal leaves no room for confidence and aspiration; and the thing which is only equal may be insufficient some future time; if it were only equal the infinite would be shut out, or in some

form or other hidden in the finite. The material has all the supply the brute requires; for his wants are not various, neither do they transcend the physical. But the supply of an intelligent being is very different; nothing less than an infinite mind and an universe full of boundless variety, can meet his wants.

As the body needs nourishment and its organs require strength and expansion, so does the mind; and as the first has all elements and provision suitable in the material, the second has all the essential elements for such high purposes, in the higher order of existence, beyond and above the material. The superior powers of the intellectual nature of man are intended for great services and illustrious ends; but in order that these should be possible and practicable, the mind must be expanded, strengthened, and enriched with all the resources of education and knowledge. All the elements, processes, dispensations, and aspects of the Divine order are suitable for these things, and operate perpetually for their accomplishment.

The human mind requires variety to supply its need and educate its powers. Its powers are so various, its capabilities so great, its movements and flights so quick and constant, and its

actions and duties so multifarious, that the few and the same things cannot complete what is required. There is a conception to be corrected and quickened, a comprehension to be strengthened and widened, an understanding to be enlightened and developed, the reason must be fed and led, the imagination watched and guided, the memory practised and rightly used, imitation perfected, the conscience purified and restored, and the affections exalted, by suitable influences, agents, and objects. Though the mind is one, yet its powers and functions are numerous, and require innumerable elements and forces to develope and direct them rightly. The order of things is as various as it is infinite: every movement as it takes its flight developes its new agencies and influences; every atom has its language and force; every inch its instructors and guardians; every action and emotion their laws and guides. As there is not an atom without its law, not a blade without its dew, not a spot without its ray of light; so there is not a power in man, nor an act demanded of him, without their counter-producing and directing laws and agents. Every moment gives birth to innumerable thoughts and feelings; every point exhibits objects which cannot be numbered;

every messenger has his special work; every voice its peculiar lessons and influences; every phenomenon its purport and powers; and every ordeal and dispensation their utility and end. The universe has its alphabets and its abstract lessons; it has its milk and strong meat. She has her musicians and artists; her orators and mathematicians; her theologians and philosophers. She has masters to suit all, lessons applicable for all, and every thing, and place. Every atom is a teacher; every living thing a professor, teaching from the chair of Divine authority and wisdom. To its variety there is no limit; to the teaching there is no end.

The human mind requires regularity and repetition. Its wants return every day; man is slow in learning, he needs the repeating of the same thing times without number. In this, also, the order of things is adapted to the relations and wants of man. Her agents are never tired; her laws are never impaired; her blessings are never exhausted; her truths are never falsified. She is as regular as the day, punctual as the hour, patient as the sun, and interminable as the endless.

V.—THE EMOTIONAL SIDE.

If we turn our attention also to the emotional department of man's nature, we shall find clear proofs, here as well as elsewhere, of the law of adaptation. The conscious emotions which man is capable of, are varied and numerous: they correspond with his wants, his safety, his dignity, his happiness, and all his relations both to himself and the universal order of things around him everywhere. Without them his nature would be incomplete: he would be an unfit member of society. If without susceptibility to emotions, he would be free from pain it is true; but it must be remembered, also, that he would be incapable of happiness, usefulness, and even life. If some of his feelings occasionally overreach their legitimate boundaries, it is nothing but the deficiency of culture on the one hand, and the misapplication, on the other, of what is good and essential in itself. Love is in itself essential for the happiness of the individual himself, as well as necessary for all the relations of man to his God, the good, and universal society; but this may be abused or neglected in its culture, and be fixed on improper objects, so as to prove a misery and a ruin. Hatred in its

unholy passion for revenge, is nothing but a good thing in itself, growing wild, and allowed to overwhelm its true boundaries in lawless passion. It is the feeling of dislike wrongly governed; which in itself is most needful to preserve self-respect, punish wrong, avoid the mean and foolish, and defend the true and the innocent.

The influences and agencies in the order of things, are both the objects of these emotions and their occasional producers. A friend produces love, and is the object of it: a foe produces dislike, and is the object of it; the loss of a friend is the cause of my grief, who at the same time is the object of my sorrow. Such are the richness and the various emotions in the human bosom, that man has a feeling for every whisper, aspect, colour, action, object, and dispensation in nature and the universe. The face of his heart answers, as a correct, clear echo, all the features outside him every where. A frown makes him dull; a smile makes him cheerful; calamity makes him sad; success produces joy; music results in merriness. The dull day makes him heavy: the bright sunshine inspires him with joy and gladness. This makes him a fit companion, a friend, and a suitable citizen of

universal space and society. His tears meet tears, his voice is blended in the song of his fellow, his sympathies take the side of the innocent, his help is enlisted on the side of the fatherless and the widow. He admires the just, the good, and the noble; he loves the true, the just, and the lovely; he dislikes the mean, the unjust, and the foolish; he fears the dangerous, the great, and the awful; he is glad at the pleasant, the successful, and the glorious; he is sorrowful at the distressing, the adverse, and the melancholy; he is calm in conscious safety, sufficiency, congenial association, and happiness; he is uneasy in doubt, in danger, and in wrong. Such is the wonderful adaptation between this extraordinary being and all the things in the universe, that they correspond all in all; the universe and he live for each other, and are complete in their unity.

VI.—WORK AND ACTION.

We see this adaptation further, if we consider the work of man, and the fitness of his powers and resources to do it. Clearly man is made for work; and if any one thinks of passing his

days on earth without work, in slothfulness and imaginable ease, he contradicts his own powers, as much as he violates the decrees of Heaven. The child, as soon as the intellect and the physical powers are a little developed, must have a doll to dress, a knife, a wheelbarrow, a top and a whip, or a hammer, that some great and important work may be done. The child is not idle; it is not his nature to do nothing; in his way he works as constant and hard as any labourer. Men in their barbaric condition work; they have their arts and branches of labour as we have them; the difference is, in the way and degree they pursue and perform them. Every body works in some form or other; if he attends not to the useful and needful, he employs his energies in the needless and the useless. If not of necessity to sustain life with bread, it is needful to work to preserve life from being an intolerable burden, and a miserable dissipation. Frequently, when men are idle as to their corporeal powers, they work hard in the schemes of their thoughts, and in their theories of imaginable designs and purposes. Reason and human experience alike testify, that true repose is in labour. To that degree all the powers of our nature find congenial exercise, are our pleasure,

satisfaction, and repose complete. Man is made for action, and when he cannot find this suitable correlative of his powers, he is dissatisfied and miserable. Every affection of the soul, every thought of the mind, and every organ of the body require action. If this were entirely denied to man, the whole of his nature would fall into a useless collapse. He would have no motive for life; he could be conscious of no high end; such an existence would be incompatible with life, much more with reason. Every thing dear to man is based upon action. Health, success, strength, beauty, happiness, and even life itself are founded in activity. Inactivity is the greatest foe to existence: under its withering inertness universal being would be palsied, and would ultimately die.

Not only inaction would have a withering influence over life directly, but also indirectly; for the means as well as the comforts of life are the result of labour. Bread is got by labour; the garbs we wear are the result of much toil; the houses we live in, with all their conveniences, are fruit of hard work; the books we read, the education we get, the knowledge we possess, and all the conveniences and comforts of life, in some way or other involve effort and activity.

All the powers of the human organism show that man is intended for action; and he is not satisfied without this, neither is he reconciled with himself, but when that activity is useful in itself, worthy in motive, and compatible with his powers, and the laws of his being. He is made for work, there is nothing for him but work, work,—his work never ends; but this is connected with the highest motives, his life and his universal good, conscious pleasure and satisfaction. Connected with his work, are his own success, and the welfare of all.

The field in which he works is the universe, and it corresponds every way with the worker. It is already made evident that man was intended for work; it is equally as clear that there is a work provided for him. He alone is able to do the work; there is no one else sent with powers and resources but himself. If he will not do it, it will not be done at all. Every field waits for his cultivation; the tree waits his ingenious hand, and the rough quarry points to him as its lord and polisher. He has work on the sea, on the river, and on the mountain; he has to open canals, railroads, and establish commerce and religion on every shore and island; he has to build the city, and attend to the wants

of the citizens; he has to do the work of earth, and attend to the will of Heaven.

There is an undeniable proof of fitness between the work, the powers, and the means in the hand of man. He can create nothing; he cannot diminish nor enlarge the simplest elements of things; all he has to do is to exercise his powers, attend to certain laws, and use and apply the elements within his reach to their proper end. There is nothing demanded of him which he cannot do; his powers and opportunities are equal to the demands made upon him. His form, varied powers, and high intelligence, raise him to the level of the greatest task. There is nothing within the range of the finite creation which he cannot do; he can develope her resources, provide for his own wants, govern and supply the need of all under his care, walk side by side with all law and order. He is competent on the boisterous sea; he is efficient in the field, in the temple, and in the Senate. Man alone, of all the millions of living beings, is so constituted and endowed with that combination of great powers, as to be equal to the work of earth, all in all. He can work and govern: he can find out the end of all things; he can fit everything to its right place. As

every star has its place and fitness in the azure of the sky, every polished stone is made fit for the wall; so is there a fitness between man and the work designed him.

It must not be forgotten, as another mark of adaptation, that the work of man is as perpetual as the laws of nature and his own powers. If at any time the work of man were finished, and the possibility for him to exercise his powers were at an end, the adaptation of things for his nature would be at an end also; or if the time ever came when he had no powers to exercise and no work to do, he would be unfit for the universe. As his nature unfolds into higher maturity, and his powers ripen into greater strength, he will rise to a higher region, but never above work. The crossing of one field only leaves him to begin another; the completion of the alphabet is the introduction into higher exercises; when he has reached the top of one ladder, he is only placed at the bottom of another. As he progresses in the scale of knowledge, of skill, and of action, the resources of the universe are unfolded before him, and his work becomes greater and higher in kind, thus ever and unchangeably fit to meet him in every degree of advancement and rank of sublimity.

Man has his powers, all materials for implements, and all means and elements for his work, provided for him. These he could not have provided for himself: without them he could not have been fit for his work. All that is required of him is, to use and unfold things to their proper purpose and end. If ever there appears an incongruity between man and the work assigned him, it will be seen, by thoughtful examination, that it proceeds from the want of cultivating the powers possessed, and the right use of the means within human reach and possession.

Who can think of the varied and great powers of man, and the conveniences and blessings unceasingly bestowed upon him by the liberal hand of an invisible Benefactor, without seeing this law of adaptation pervading all? Think of the monuments of his past skill and industry, the discoveries of his untiring mind, the advancement of his persevering effort, and the productions of his active hands. If we look to the city, or to the field; if we think of mines or commerce, of arts, sciences, philosophy, or religion, we are alike convinced, that man is fit for his work, and his work fit for him. The same Infinite Mind and hands, which designed

and formed the vast universe, also formed man; and his skill was such that could not fail in design, nor fall short in execution.

VII.—NEED AND PROVISION.

HUMAN need, and the provision made for it, show equally plain the same universal law of adaptation. The need of man is higher in its character, and greater in number, than that of any other being. His nature has greater dignity, his powers are more active, his relations are more numerous, and his capacity of consumption exceeds other organic and living things. It is one of the greatest wonders in nature that so much want should be met, and that according to the easy regular conditions of things. It is not by accident, miraculous interposition, or special fiats, our wants are met and supplied: but by natural mediums, agents, and such regular laws and order, which clearly show some arranging perpetual wisdom, and kindness of boundless resources at the root of all. Every moment brings its innumerable wants; every wish has its characteristic requisitions; every breath is attended with untold need; every action has its numerous demands. Every

organ demands rest, supply of various blessings, and diversified elements in all times and places; and every thought and feeling have necessities which no earthly and finite source can supply. The need of one man exceeds all your calculation; but when you extend it over all the human race, you are lost in amazed perplexity. We cannot rightly estimate the need of one moment of time; but when we think of the need of all times and eternity, we are distressed with the conscious feeling of our incompetency to grapple with such a thought. Yet the need of all times has been provided for, as well as that of the present one; the wants of all men are met, as well as that of the individual. We have but imperfect means to know our wants; for those beyond our feeling and knowledge are various and numerous; perhaps they exceed those which we are conscious of. There are invisible agents, laws, and blessings, requisite with every breath, surrounding every spot, and accompanying every step; yet there is a law of fitness to meet and attend to all; there is a suitable provision for everything. As these secret wants are beyond our supply and control, there is a kindness in making them impracticable to our knowledge; for the things which we cannot help

cannot be usefully known, but might add to our perplexity and misery. When we reflect calmly upon those wants which are within our knowledge, they almost make us to doubt, and cause an unhappy feeling of perplexity in our minds as to the way and certainty of supply; but if we knew all, we should be filled possibly with perplexity and doubt which could not be allayed, and this would be prejudicial to our comfort and usefulness alike. Though we do not know our wants all in all more than we do the provision in extent and variety made for them; yet we have sufficient evidences to our reason and consciences, that all are met by suitable means and blessings of supply.

The need of man is either real or imaginary; circumstantial and contracted, or essential and correlative, with his being and relations. It may not be always an easy thing to draw a line of difference between the imaginary and the real, for what is superficial and circumstantial often are as dear, important, and needful in our estimate, as the most essential need of our nature. The imaginary frequently is so interwoven into our nature by the force of influences and habits, that we feel and deem it as essential as any want of our nature. Yet the difference is

broad and clear in itself. One need is a correlative of our organs, the reason of things, universal relation to ourselves and all others, and with even our usefulness, happiness, and life itself. The other is based upon fancy, habit, passion, selfishness, or some blind superficial feeling and desire. It cannot be expected that the true order of wisdom meets extravagant fancy, more than a wise father meets the wishes of a dissipated prodigal son. An order which met and supplied all such extravagant demands and fancies, could not be good and right, any more than a parent wise who meets all the silly wishes of his children; for that would feed and educate what is not in itself right, and ultimately lead to uselessness and ruin. The true order of things supports her own laws, meets her own wants, fills her own vessels, accepts her own cheques, and discharges her own debts. She must not be charged with our fancy debts, and considered criminal and imperfect, because she meets not their claims, nor clears off their long-standing arrears.

Provision is made for man in all variety, as his need requires. To provide partially for human want, shows the existence of Divine power and beneficence; but to provide for all

his necessities, shows the unceasing and inexhaustible bounties of our supreme and common Benefactor. This gives completeness, as well as it evinces the wealth and the unchangeable character of the order which exists. Every breath has its provision; every pulsation its laws; and every sensation its wants provided and met. Even the things which appear most circumstantial, occasional, and extreme, are all thought of, and provided for accordingly. Every hair has its place and laws; every true step has its directing agent, and protecting power. There is a provision for man in ease and in trouble; he is met with suitable things in health and in affliction; he is supported on the couch of suffering, and strengthened to pursue his daily hard labour; he is provided for in feeble infancy, and is not left and discarded in old age. Whether he is on the sea, or on the shore, whether a peasant or a nobleman, in the mill or in the parlour, on the road or at rest; whether he wants sleep or action, or companions and friends, he is all the same provided for. There is a provision for his sins and maladies, for his grief and sorrow, for his person, his condition, and circumstances. As his wants vary in nature, in degree, in number, and relation, all are

fully and minutely provided for him accordingly.

And this is not a thing of a particular place, or in a certain period of time: it includes universal nature, time, and place. As men live in various climes, Providence has so diversified human wants, in their modifications of degree and nature on the one side, and the productions and provisions made for them on the other, as to establish beautiful equality. As one age and people advance, and their wants in proportion increase and multiply; their wants are met by the increase of material wealth, new discoveries, convenient arts, religious and educational establishments, and political and commercial improvements, as the need may demand. The wealth of the Divine provision is neither limited by space, nor terminated by duration.

And this provision is made on such grounds, and according to such terms, that all may avail themselves of it. If it had no condition at all, it could not be suitable to man as a rational, responsible being; neither would it show a Divine law and order at the foundation of it. If the conditions were impracticable, it would be the same, virtually, as if no provision

was made; for the thing which cannot possibly be enjoyed, is the same as if it never existed, only more aggravating. The blessings which suit every man, have their conditions near him, and are practicable in their performance. The conditions are never above his powers, means, and resources. As the provision is various in its richness and appliances, so are the terms various, according to the conditions, powers, and resources of man. As the terms of possession have a relation of fitness to the blessings which men need, also with their powers and conditions in nature and degree; the blessings which all need are equally available. The smallest need must respect these terms, and the greatest will be supplied, if they are performed. There can be no excuse: all is on common ground: there is no unfairness. The same result will follow the same conduct in the case of all, in all times, places, ranks, and circumstances.

VIII.—SOCIAL TENDENCY.

MAN has a social tendency, and the universal order of things meets him as such. This tendency is as natural as life, and as early as infancy. With the force of nature, the feeling

of the parent clings to the child, at even the moment of birth, and the infant, by the force of the same unreasoning law, cleaves to its mother. In passing through a village of a rural district on a summer evening, you will find in one spot a number of children playing like lambs, in another place a group of young men jolly and joyful, not far distant a number of young women, modest, and full of expectation, in another spot a few middle-age and old men conversing about the news of the day, and before another door, on a small stone bench, a few old women talking as busily as any of the stories and circumstances of every body in the village, except those of their own. All this is but an exposition of a common law, and of a thing which universally exists. Whatever language man speaks, whatever clime he lives in, and whatever may be his rank, condition, and associations, his social tendency follows and governs him every where. What is natural and essential in human nature, no condition or circumstance in life can utterly destroy; it survives all: so does the tendency of sociality in the sympathies and conduct of mankind. The tendency of man's sympathy is towards man; he has no equal companion in any thing else. If

ever this social tendency is abused or destroyed, one of the deepest laws of our nature is damaged and violated.

It is natural for man to be inclined to man; for in man he sees his own portrait. Every living thing associates with its own species,—fish with fish, bird with bird, sheep with sheep, man with man. Thus the species of creatures are kept in perpetual order and purity. But this is as useful to the whole, as it is natural to the individual. The happiness and peace of the individual and society generally depend upon it; the prosperity of commerce, the power of religion, and the security of all institutions,—whether political, literary, secular, or religious,—alike depend upon this. Man is improved by intercourse with his fellow; upon this depends much of his comfort, and even his existence. Without it, man would have no love for man; there would be no wish for improvement on the one hand, and no desire to impart it on the other. In fine, there would be an end of all unity, progress, harmony, and all hope for man.

If the order of things had no provision for man as a social being, we should conclude that it was not adapted for him, or his social feeling not natural. But we are not driven to either

conclusion: we see evidences everywhere, that the order of wisdom hath respected and provided for her own creation. This is clear in the family institution, in the unity of the church, civil governments, and in all ameliorating establishments. All are based upon the force of men's natural sympathies and duty to benefit one another, and all ultimately founded upon Divine purposes. It is not an isolated feeling in the bosom of one or a few on one side; but in all sympathies through the length and breadth of society. All hearts and faces turn towards one another. Friendship returns in friendship; love meets love half way; one good act deserves, and generally gets, another. It would be hopeless and miserable, if all love and desire for intercourse and friendship were all on one side, and never returned. But the same feeling, in some form and degree or other, is in every bosom; which is the hope and power of the social tie. It is the ordained law to accomplish and govern the social tendency.

There are evidences everywhere that the order which governs and runs through all, has provided elements for the culture and consolidation of the social feeling. All men have the same susceptibilities and mental sympathies; a whole

community, numbering many millions, speak one language; the natural expression of mind, in its different conscious states, is one in all men; all the members of the human family are impressible of the same feelings of sorrow, pity, love, gratitude, and inclination for social intercourse and attachment. The wise Author of our nature has established the law of mutual dependence and obligation between the human race universally both in time and space, which is the greatest cement of the social tie. Such is the unity between man and man, that one cannot do without the other. This runs through all classes, ranks, and stations, so that if one were destroyed, there would be a want and a failure. The highest depends upon the lowest, as well as the lowest upon the highest; the wealthy depend upon the poor, and the poor upon the wealthy; kings depend upon the subjects, much more than subjects depend upon kings; the dependence of children and parents is mutual. The one has something which all need, and society at large have many things which the individual must have; which are as constant and powerful as the needle and the loadstone to unite society to one another. This law of social tendency engenders kindness, in some degree,

in the hardest and most tyrannical of human beings towards the poorest, the most helpless, and the meanest of the race. It is the law which contains in its keeping the happiness, the preservation, the strength, and the advancement of the human family.

IX.—DIVERSITY OF POWERS.

THE same important law we perceive in the diversity of human power and genius, and the fit elements and provision in the Divine order for them, and anticipative of them. If all men had only one power, however important and useful that might be, all could not be employed, and the want of all could not have been possibly met. If the economy of order had only one element provided, one class of agents to instruct, and one form of education to give, it would be inefficient and unsuitable to meet the wants of society as it is.

The diversified powers which man is capable of unfolding and using, are needful for the happiness and existence of society. Suppose, for a moment, that all men were obliged to follow one profession or business, from the necessity, that they had no capacity or genius for any thing else. There would be no work for all hands and brains;

there would be more workmen than work, and more producers than consumers; there could have been no employment for every body. If all were of the same business, there would be greater competition than there is even at present; and miserable would be the portion of the majority. If we had the same wants as we have at present, it could never be supplied. If all were farmers, what should we do for artisans? If all were navigators, what should we do for husbandmen of the soil? If all were prose writers, what should we do for poetry? If all were ordinary thinkers, what should we do for philosophers? We need the philosopher and the poet, the preacher and the statesman, the doctor and the lawyer, the teacher and the pupil, the husbandman and the builder, the merchant and the tradesmen, the miller and the fisherman, the cabinet-maker and the blacksmith, the printer and the bookseller, the tailor and the shoemaker,—all contribute to the common treasury of society, and meet common wants. Such variety of powers adds also to the happiness and harmony of society. If there were only one power, and that possessed by all alike, society could not have been so harmonious and united; for all would have been jealous of one another, and all could have done what all

the rest did. If all were of one employment, what monotony! what tameness! Life would be inconceivably dull, and an intolerable burden. It would be entirely incongruous with our present organs, sensations, and wants.

Though a regal power and genius can do all he turns his attention to in a superior way; yet he cannot do all, nor can he do everything in an equal manner. A man may be a great philosopher; but would not do very well to plough, or to break stones on the road all the day. It may be that a man is a poet of deep music, an orator of great power, a statesman of great skill, a theologian of profound insight; and yet could never make a coat to fit, a pair of shoes to be neat and easy, build a house, nor make one elegant article of furniture. All men cannot, for a hundred reasons, acquire and practise all that is required in life. In some cases there may be constitutional and organic deficiencies; in others, mental ones. In others, a want of education and application; and in all, a want of time and opportunity. All powers are not intended to be possessed and practised by the same individual: that would involve society nearly in the same calamity, as if it had only one power. These powers are spread over society. Some have capacities to do one thing,

others to perform other things; and all are for the common service of the one and the whole. All have power to sustain their parts, pursue their own good, make the world richer and happier, and please and honour God.

It is true that the developement and the right direction of these powers are very much under the control of man himself. They may be enfeebled or strengthened, corrupted or purified, by the true or false habits of man. But their endowment, as to their degree and variety, is beyond the power of the most gifted of finite creatures. All the genius of mankind put together, could not create the tiniest genius; neither can it make a small genius a great one. All which men can do is, make the best of things as they have them, by feeding and directing them to their true boundaries; they cannot make the nothing something, and the small great, more than they can make a parrot a child, and a monkey a man.

As the order of nature is equal in all its parts and sides, we see this variety of powers required and provided for in the object, as much as it is a matter of endowment in the subject. Such are the number and variety of works to be done, of paths to be walked, and regulations to be

attended to, as to give employment suitable and congenial to all powers, from the child to the most gigantic mind on earth; such are the diversity and magnitude of man's wants, either to sustain his nature, heal his diseases, comfort him in his sorrows, remove his doubts, instruct his dulness, and fit him for his future destiny, that a field for the greatest and the most various genius men possess, is opened for them to attend to their fellow man; and his wants could never have been met without such variety of powers. However great and various the powers of men may be, there is more than a provision to meet them, in all their relations and demands, in the order which universally exists. There are elements to feed them, there are agents to instruct and guide them, tools and instruments for their use, work for their energy, and noble and high achievements for their ambition. And men are led to walk these various paths, and occupy the numerous positions made for them, either by natural impulse, or rational conviction, or the choice of others, so that there is an agent for every work, as well as a fit work for every man. You see one man inclined to pursue one train of thought and employment which the other dislikes; whatever

may influence such a decision in all cases, it is a wise order that it is so; for thus the various works are done, the resources of creation explored, human powers engaged, and all carried on successfully and harmoniously, without a friction.

X.—THE LAW OF PROGRESS.

We are equally struck with this wise law of adaptation, if we view man in his progressive character. Every organic existence has to a certain limit the power of progressiveness. The common grass, the fine blade, the pure flower, the small shrub, the great oak, the invisible animalculum, the worm, the fly, the dodo, and the greatest beast of the sea or the forest, have in common powers of growth. The difference is,—some of them have the power to progress in a higher form, to a greater degree, and for a longer time, than others. The progressive power of man is both higher in character, and immeasurably greater in degree, than that of any thing else in this world. He has a higher nature, greater destiny, and superior means provided for him than any thing else. Man is born the most helpless of all, but advances incomparably faster and beyond all.

There is never an end to human aspiration; he never reaches an elevation above which he has no desire to soar; he never reaches a place beyond which he has no wish to advance; he is never satisfied to remain within any visible and limited boundaries. He ever aspires after the unknown; he ever searches for the unsearchable; he constantly transcends the limited and the visible. His ambition is larger than the world, longer than time, and is never satisfied this side of the Infinite. His ambition never rests; it is never tired; it never says it is enough. He is above every station, possession, and achievement on earth; he ever says, "More beyond, and above." The child, immediately he is able to lisp a few words, shows his inquisitive nature by asking questions which can hardly be answered for the reason of their number, and their puzzling simplicity; and this follows him through all the stages of manhood to feeble old age. This is nothing but an evidence of the law of advancement and a condition of it. Whether we view the undying nature and destiny of man, or his lofty powers, it is alike evident that he is made to advance. The developement of his powers, the maturity of his nature, his usefulness to others, his own happiness

and salvation,—are involved in his progress. If he did not progress, not only he could not gain new elevations and possessions, he could not even improve and conserve what he has. If the economy of order had no provision for his progress, it would be unfit; because averse to the deep law of his nature, and incapable to assist him to work out his true destiny.

We see in the order of things everywhere arrangements and elements, to assist human advancement. Whether we view man simply as a member of society, as an intellectual being, or as a moral and religious subject, alike there are provisions in the Divine order for his advancement. The order of goodness is advancement. The barbaric, according to her laws, becomes civilized; the ignorant is made intelligent; and the sinful and the disobedient are raised to holiness and happiness. Advancement is the language of jurisprudence, reason, and religion. The law of the Divine order demands his progress; her blessings and agents assist it. He never rises above his teachers; if he rises beyond one class, he is removed to a higher one, and that for ever. He never exceeds the copy; he can never cross the outer line; he never can

reach the last improvement. He acquires one thing, to be more capable for the next; and is raised to the top of one elevation, to behold a higher one still. Every dispensation is intended to polish him; every effort is to strengthen him; every blessing is to make him richer; and every day to make him better. The opening before him is endless; the provisions around him are rich to profuseness; the agents are numerous and skilful; and his own capability is illimitable. The voices of law and mercy, of hope and happiness, of religion and reason, of means and ends, cry unanimously, *Excelsior*.

XI.—CHRISTIAN PROVISION.

THERE is, finally, a gracious adaptation between man's calamity and the happy order existing. Man is not that holy and happy being that he was made and intended to be. He has revolted against the one authority of absolute claim and power, which resulted in the withdrawal of the Divine light and favour, and all calamities and miseries. The calamity of humanity is sin. As it is a transgression of the one Divine order, it deprives all its agents of the privileges and blessings of that order, of the

smile and approval of the one independent Sovereign, and produces conscious guilt and misery in the mind of the transgressor. Sin is a waste of power, an exhaustion of human goodness, a reverse of human fortune, and puts man out of all true relation with God and universal order;—sin is a crime, a malady, and a ruin. It is a positive condition of the negation of all good, and the possession of all evil. As sure as poison destroys life, and frost kills the tender the flower, sin destroys the spiritual power and the life of man. It brings in its rear suffering, ignorance, helplessness, and death.

The natural system and order of things are above man's reach, in this state of his sinful condition; and do not contain the elements which he needs, in this condition of his sinful calamity. The order that provides only for the physical is too short for him; the order which provides for holy and obedient subjects is above him; he cannot reach its conditions, and claim its blessings. Though the natural order of things has provided for his physical maladies in her various herbs and minerals, in the universal existence of the law of restorative tendency, and the numerous elements and agents of her healing skill and power; it does not appear that his

moral malady has been anticipated and provided for in the system of nature. The provisions of the natural order of things are those of law and order; hence intended for the obedient, the just, and the pure. Man by his revolt violated the golden conditions of this order, hence forfeited life and all her blessings; and another provision must be made, or he must be blotted from existence, or perpetuate his miserable being as an alien and a prisoner; for a rebel cannot be winked at in the dominion of exact order and infinite justice.

A change of conduct on the side of man, has resulted in a change of relation and condition to his God, and the order of his law; hence, if he is to be restored to his place, there must be some new provision as an addendum to the common order of things, or an additional codicil to the will of God. There is only one ground to expect such a provision,—the infinite compassion of a loving Father. As man is His darling creature, and as He has given him already such high rank and dignity, and has done all in goodness towards him, it is likely that He will do this also. Infinite Wisdom and equal Love can do all; and they have provided all for man. This provision is in Christianity: no where else

do we find the elements which our nature and condition need, based on the fullest evidences, and tested by the most reliable experiments,—we find all in all in this humble and sublime system. To meet the ignorance of man there is a revelation, with an economy of agents, provided for him; to meet his sinfulness, there is a vicarious and mediatorial provision; to meet his helplessness and lifeless condition, there is a Divine power and influence within his reach; to meet him as an alien and a free agent, there are means within his reach, by the use of which, he may avail himself of all the blessings provided for him; and to meet his fears and death, there are security and endless life and happiness provided for him. There is as much fitness in this gracious provision to meet him as a sinner, as there is in nature to supply his wants as an organic being. It is provided for him in the character of a sinner; and is as suitable for him, as such, as the pure moral order of God is for saints and angels. He can meet the demands of Christianity as a sinner, as he can the requirements of natural laws as a creature; as one is suited to his condition and relations, so is the other. This cannot be disputed, without menacing its suitability: hence the wis-

dom and Divinity of Christianity would be involved; or Christianity deprived of its special Divinity.

Now is man complete,—he has nature and grace, providence and a Saviour, the supplying of his earthly wants and the pardon of his sins, the creature and the Creator, heaven and earth,—in a sentence, he has all things needful to fit him for all the duties and blessings of earth, and prepare him for all the joys and happiness of heaven. Christianity is intended to restore him to all right and true relations with God and the universe, bring back for him his real possession,—all the blessings of the Divine purpose,—and fit him for the high service and enjoyment of his God. It restores his faith, his heart, his life, and his happiness. It restores him to God and the universe, and God and the universe to him. It provides life beyond death, happiness beyond the grave, and restores man into unity with order, and fits him for honours and glory immortal.

XII.—CONCLUSION.

CAN you think of this law of universal fitness, without seeing in it everywhere the hand of an all-wise intelligence? And can you reflect

upon the wise order of things, which runs through all, without being inspired with a motive for life? It has been the end of these observations to exalt your faith, guide your understanding, and present to you motives for true life. It is an unchangeable law, *He that honours Me, him will I honour.* To honour the Infinite Sovereign, is the fit order of universal goodness and law. The contrary would be unfit, inasmuch as it would be incongruous with the relation of finite and dependent beings to their infinite independent Lord; and unequal with His nature, government, and His active goodness towards us. The true, the lofty, and the good, must be honoured; the reverse is opposed to the reason, the justice, and the relation of every right conceivable order. To honour Him is to keep the laws of His established order; to acknowledge Him in His order; to use all the means, agents, and blessings of His order to His service and praise. It is a befitting correspondence between the subject and the Sovereign, the agent and the object; it is the rising into, and the following out, the true relations of things. This requires enlightened intellect, exalted faith, true heart, fixed aim, and life devoted to truth and order.

The fit counterparts in human life to the Divine order are virtue and truth. False and sinful life, in all its phases and relations, is not only inconsistent with itself and order, but a violation of the whole of right and fitness. In this, nature, revelation, reason, and the sentiment of moral sense in man agree. The testimony of nature in all her revelations and utterances is true; all her productions, laws, and sympathies are true and pure. A false character is unfit for the Divine order. He cannot decipher her meaning; he has no sympathy with her laws; he is not fit to declare her precepts; he cannot be trusted with her mandates of life and death. The virtueless has no sympath with it; he cannot appreciate its harmony and blessings; he is not fit for her honours and rewards. The best logic in man is his conclusions towards truth; his highest and purest aspirations are those towards the true and the pure. Every holy breeze leads to virtue; every true teacher guides towards the happier and the loftier regions of truth. Safety is in truth; peace is in innocency; reward is in faithfulness; and security and possession are in right. On this ground are based the honour of God, the claim of law, the interest of man, and the reason

and utility of universal order. No people could live long in absolute falsehood; no people could advance, nor even exist, without some virtue and acknowledged right among them, which show that truth and virtue are the true sides of human life. The Divine order requires this as a right, from the nature and the relations of things, on the ground of universal good and harmony, and the advancement and happiness of His creatures at large.

The order of things is a spontaneous result of infinite, absolute fitness. Its principles are immutably fixed; her laws are unalterably written and ratified; her purposes and designs are as the infinite in truth and faithfulness. We must rise to order; for we would not, if we could, bring order down to us. We cannot change nor modify law; we must be modified or be changed to her mould and spirit. It is neither our power nor advantage to do the one; but it is both our duty, power, and privilege to do the other. The imperfect must rise to the perfect; the ignorant must advance toward the knowing; the false must elevate to the true; the creature must submit to the Creator. The order which exists is suitable for us, and for all high and happy purposes; but we are not so fit for her

designs and works; hence, we do not unfold her treasures and enjoy her blessings, to that degree we might.

The unchangeable fitness of the Divine order, is our hope and security. Unfitness can excite no hope, it can find no security. Unfitness is blind, uncertain, and sure to fail; it cannot be the secret of wisdom, nor the means of success. The end of things in the Divine economy is determined by their fitness; if the first is great and honourable, the second will be high and glorious. If man makes himself a vessel of purity and usefulness, his rank and position will be illustrious and dignified. In the material and passive creation, things could not have had a higher rank and fitness than they have, because they are directly the productions of Divine wisdom, and are governed by His single will, and never swerve nor are impaired from their service and position. But with man it is otherwise; by the corruption of his nature, and the abuse of his energies and powers, his rank is meaner, and his position lower, than it might be. This contains the highest motive for all to rise and advance; the condition of all in the future order of things will bear an exact proportion with their fitness for it, both as to

happiness, honour, and usefulness. In this law of adaptation is involved, also, the fact of immortality as well as the felicity of it. We see fitness in man, more than in the brute, for immortality; hence, according to the law of fitness, we conclude and believe that such a life is his special portion; for the law of adaptation provides all that is fit and equal. It is also a matter of reason and consciousness, as well as of revelation, that felicity is the portion of the true and the faithful ones; hence we believe in a future heaven as a matter of fitness.

The whole, in the economy of order, proceeds on the ground of fitness for its end. Whatever is not fit for its end, has an irresistible force of destruction in itself. Such is the order of things, that nothing ultimately can rise above its own qualifications. Hence the value and importance of all moral and Christian means; because they are mediums of fitness to qualify us for our true and future destiny of happiness and usefulness.

Is it possible to account for this all-pervading law of adaptation, on any ground except that of intelligent skill? If it were a mere accidental casualty, it could not be regular and universal, and according to exact law and order. Law

and harmony are not the productions of undefinable abstraction or nothing. If we occasionally meet with an abortion or a failure, so far as we can examine and understand such cases, they proceed from some violations of law; and if we had the power to trace all things to their several causes, we should most likely see clearly that all failures are the fit sequences of the law of justice, on account of its violation, or that of kindness and wisdom, instructing and correcting our folly and aberration. It cannot be believed that things always existed in this fit condition they are in at present; that would prove too much. It would not only falsify history, and deprive us of our true idea of a God, but would also prove something eternal; so it would be only a substitution of one Deity instead of the other. Neither can it be maintained, if things were not always in this state of fitness, that such an order was produced without an efficient Cause. That would be to say, that nothing produces something; and that out of nothing the most exact and glorious order proceeded. Whoever believes this in theory, nobody believes it in practice. No infidel in the world believes that he can live without eating and drinking; that he can build a noble mansion without a

brick, an architect, a mason, and a joiner; that he shall have a splendid crop without ploughing, manuring, sowing, and exercising his skill and diligence, ay, without a farm at all. Yet he ought to believe all this, to be consistent, and much more.

It cannot be that this universal fitness has been produced, in process of time, by the force of mere blind and accidental accommodation; that is, that things by a long process fitted themselves to one another; or the greater force conquered the smaller one, and things have found an equilibrium, and are settled down in harmony and order. This theory can never solve the questions forced upon us; it is suicidal to itself, it takes for granted things that should be proved and cleared; it accepts of a part, and denies the rest. 1. How came the universe into existence? This question must be answered some way or other, which this theory does not and can not. This theory accepts of existence, and yet denies the one efficient possible Great Cause. The production of existence is the highest difficulty; if once this can be solved, all the rest becomes possible and easy. 2. If fitness was established by the uncaused blind power of accommodation, how came it to pass that every law, relation, and object,

happened to be in the best manner possible? We have no power of conceiving that the order of things might be different to what it is, and yet fit for all its purposes and ends. The power that thus arranged all things so suitably, we call the Fountain of Intelligence, whom we adore as a God, let others call Him what they please. 3. If by force and accommodation all things have found their place and level in the order of things, how came it to pass that these modifying laws or forces existed at all? Did they produce themselves? Or did they exist eternally or accidentally? Or were they produced by some anterior forces, or by some higher cause? If they are the production of other things, what are those other things which produced them? If so, we are just in the same place, we travel from one thing to another, until we come to the Infinite and the Eternal every where. There is no other solution. If they are independent and eternal, then they are Divine: and it is nothing but play with words, and modification and evasion of the gravest truth in existence, to evade the one Intelligent Infinite Cause. 4. How came it to pass that the universal order which exists, should give the preference in her blessings and laws to certain actions called

virtue? The diligent invariably prospers; the slothful as certainly suffers and retrogrades; the temperate is cheerful, happy, and long-lived. Honesty is universally approved of, and essential for the happiness and prosperity of society; the true and the faithful are always respected and honoured, in the degree these virtues are known and prominent; and the false and the unfaithful are as universally despised and discarded. Conscious integrity is always accompanied with self-approval; and the reverse ever with feelings of misery and disapproval. These things are constant and universal, and cannot be accounted for but on the ground of an order proceeding from a holy, benevolent, and unchangeable Intelligence. It is not a matter of human opinion; but proceeds from the order and relation of things; it cannot be the result of material forces finding at last a successful equipoise and harmony, by some happy, blind agency; for they are reality of thought, feeling, and action, and not qualities of material substance; and leaving things to their own guidance and findings, there is to our conception no reason that one class of abstract things should be more fit, and lead to happiness and prosperity rather than another.

After all our wandering amidst the barren theories and ingenious speculations of men, we return to a simple, old account of the stupendous fact, and find repose in the degree we rely on the record. "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*" Than this account we have nothing more comprehensive, more simple, more sublime, and more consistent.

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